
6. What is the overall sense of the war in Iraq that you (personally) take away from these stories? In a Short Form interview, Klay said that there are books in which...

A.) War is where men will glory, or a tragi-comic farce, or a quasi-mystical experience, or a product of corporate interests, or a noble sacrifice for freedom, or meaningless suffering, or mundane and kind of boring, or the place where boys become men, or where men become traumatized victims, or where green soldiers become fearsome killers. I could go on.

B.) How is war portrayed in these stories? Does the depiction of war differ from story to story?

7. How did Phil Klay's choice of first person narration affect your reading experience? What did you think of his use of various, and quite different, narrators? Does the lack of Iraqi voices in these stories add to or detract from your reading experience?

8. In what ways does knowing Klay is a former marine who served in Iraq inform your understanding of, and emotional connection to, these stories? How might your reading experience have been different if he had not served?

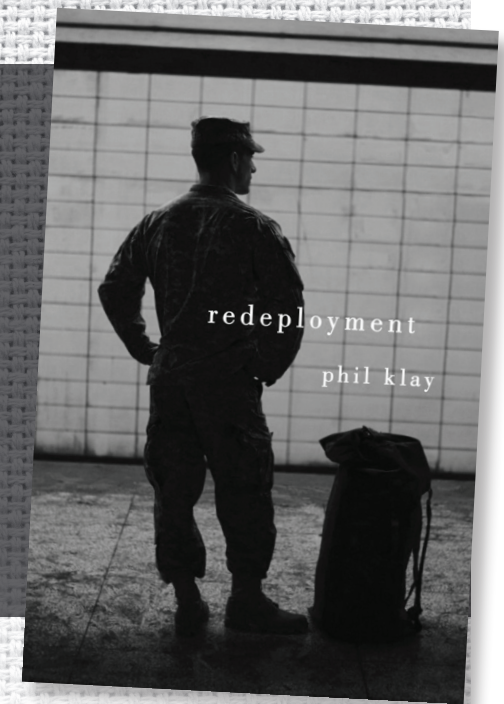
9. What do you think Phil Klay achieved by writing short stories instead of a novel?

10. If you've read other modern war novels or stories (The Naked and the Dead, Catch 22, Slaughterhouse Five, The Things They Carried, Billy Lynn's Long Half-Time Walk, Yellow Birds, or others), how does Redeployment compare? Is the war in Iraq different from other wars the U.S. has fought?

Discussion Questions

"The best thing written so far on what the war did to people's souls."

- Dexter Filkins
The New York Times



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Phil Klay was born in White Plains, NY, and went to high school at the Jesuit school Regis High School, in New York City. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 2005, and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Marine Logistics Group from January 2007 to February 2008.

He left the Corps in July, 2009, and received his MFA from Hunter College, where he studied with Colum McCann and Peter Carey, and worked as Richard Ford's research assistant. His first published story, "Redeployment", appeared in

Granta's Summer 2011 issue. That story led to the sale of his forthcoming collection, which will be published in seven countries. His writing has also appeared in the New York Times, New York Daily News, Tin House, and in The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2012.

Book Summary

Phil Klay's *Redeployment* takes readers to the frontlines of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, asking us to understand what happened there, and what happened to the soldiers who returned. Interwoven with themes of brutality and faith, guilt and fear, helplessness and survival, the characters in these stories struggle to make meaning out of chaos.

- In "Redeployment" a soldier who has had to shoot dogs because they were eating human corpses must learn what it is like to return to domestic life in suburbia, surrounded by people "who have no idea where Fallujah is, where three members of your platoon died."
- In "After Action Report", a Lance Corporal seeks expiation for a killing he didn't commit, in order that his best friend will be unburdened.
- In "Bodies," a Mortuary Affairs Marine tells about his experiences collecting remains—of U.S. and Iraqi soldiers both.
- In "Praying in a Furnace," a chaplain sees his understanding of Christianity, and his ability to provide solace through religion, tested by the actions of a ferocious Colonel.

- And in the darkly comic "Money as a Weapons System," a young Foreign Service Officer is given the absurd task of helping Iraqis improve their lives by teaching them to play baseball.

These stories reveal the intricate combination of monotony, bureaucracy, comradeship and violence that make up a soldier's daily life at war, and the isolation, remorse, and despair that can accompany a soldier's homecoming.

Redeployment is poised to become a classic in the tradition of war writing. Across nations and continents, Klay sets in devastating relief the two worlds a soldier inhabits: one of extremes and one of loss. Written with a hard-eyed realism and stunning emotional depth, this work marks Phil Klay as one of the most talented new voices of his generation. (From the publisher.)

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the 12 stories most strikes you...and why? Which story do you find most poignant or heart-wrenching? Most brutal or gruesome? Funny or sardonic?
2. Talk about the title story "Redeployment." Does it reflect soldiers' real-world attempts to return to normalcy in civilian life? Is normalcy even possible, given what they have witnessed and/or participated in? What is your experience—either as a returning soldier or as someone who has known, or perhaps read about, a returning soldier?
3. What does the story "In Money as a Weapons System" suggest about bureaucratic bumbling with regards to the government's war efforts?
4. Discuss the story "OIF" and the military's list of alphabet-soup acronyms. Why are such nondescriptive and impersonal terms used? How would you describe the narrative tone of the story?
5. How has the chaplain's faith, in "Praying in the Furnace," been challenged by his experiences of the war?